

FyI

**TOWN OF ACTON  
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2005 MEETING**

7:30 p.m.  
Town Hall – Room 126

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: Tuesday February 8, 2005  
Acton Town Hall, 7:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Ann Sussman (Chair), Sam Lawton, Renee Robins, Mary Utt, Art Wu, Antonio Santoro

**Also in attendance:** Bob Johnson, Board of Selectmen; Terra Freidrichs; Karen Metheny, Boxborough Planning Board

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:43 p.m.

**1. Meeting Minutes**

Minutes from the December 14, 2004 meeting were approved with minor revisions.

**2. Appointment of Antonio Santoro to TAC**

Antonio is having some difficulty getting final approval of his appointment to the TAC from the Volunteer Coordinating Committee. Bob Johnson will do what is necessary to get final approval.

**3. Follow-up to Meeting with Planning Board**

Ann worked with Lauren Rosenzweig, Chair of the Planning Board, to prepare two letters to be jointly submitted to the BoS as follow-up to the joint meeting of the TAC and PB held on December 14, 2004. One letter advocates the formation of a South Acton MBTA Coordinating Committee to work with neighbors and the BoS to address issues and concerns resulting from the change in commuter rail service to South Acton Station and the resulting growth in parking demand. The letter was reviewed and minor edits were suggested.

A second letter addresses the proposed placement of a traffic signal on Route 2A at the entrance to Brookside Shops. Funding to pay for a traffic signal, if warranted, was placed in escrow by the developer. Although traffic operations could now warrant a signal at this location, there is support from the Planning Board, the TAC, and the East Acton community to use the funds for a signal at the intersection of Concord Road and Route 2A. Although this may not be feasible based on the original agreement with the Brookside Shops developer, the joint letter from the TAC and PB to the BoS advocates that the BoS explore this possibility with the developer. Final versions of the two letters were submitted to the Planning Board for transmittal to the BoS.

#### **4. Presentation by Terra Freidrichs on Design Review Guidelines**

Terra has been advocating for funding under the Community Preservation program to support a Design Review Guidelines Study Group. She feels that Acton's zoning bylaws are too vague and need a more visual basis ("form based guidelines") which would provide pictures clarifying what is otherwise expressed in the text. Terra provided several examples of bylaws from other communities which use this approach.

Discussion of this issue led to additional discussion regarding what the TAC needs to do to get closure on its activities related to management of Route 2A traffic and development. Ann suggested that we need to resolve what we intend to do and that we need to finalize a "product." Ann felt there were two issues:

1. What do we present to the BoS relevant to Route 2A?
2. What do we do relevant to design review guidelines?

This discussion was resumed later in the meeting.

#### **5. Presentation by Karen Metheny, Chair of Boxborough Planning Board**

Karen presented the Boxborough Master Plan, Design Standards, and Trail Master Plan for Route 111. The town has been looking at revisions to its Master Plan and the development of design review guidelines since 2000. Cisco funded the development of a new Master Plan. At this time, the Master Plan has been accepted by the Planning Board but has not been voted on by the town. The focus has been on the Route 111 corridor in terms of design review. A Design Review Board has been recommended which would do site plan review for business and commercial development of over 1000sf in the Town Center District. Karen said that the establishment of design standards has facilitated a collaborative relationship with developers. If developers know what the town wants, then they will try to work with you. The guidelines are on the town's website and include pictures to go along with the guidelines (similar to what Terra advocated in her presentation).

Also discussed during Karen's presentation was the Boxborough site plan review process. Karen also passed around copies of the Trail Master Plan for Route 111 which establishes guidelines for sidewalks and walking paths within the corridor. All development along Route 111 is obligated to contribute an easement for development of the "trail."

Following Karen's presentation and following-up on the discussion begun at the end of Terra's presentation, various action items were identified for the February TAC meeting that respond to the Route 2A issues.

- Sam will prepare graphic examples of appropriate sidewalk design standards.
- Art will chose appropriate examples of good and bad sidewalk layouts from the photos taken during the TAC site visit.
- The TAC as a group will review and refine the matrix of Route 2A suggested improvements. Art will send out the previous draft to the TAC for review.

- Ann will review the Boxborough design review guidelines to determine which provisions may be appropriate/applicable to the Route 2A corridor.

#### **6. Contact with Littleton Planning Board**

It was agreed that it would be desirable to establish contact with the Littleton Planning Board to discuss our activity and issues relevant to the Route 2A corridor. Bob Johnson will provide Art with the name of a contact and Art will make the contact.

#### **7. Woodlands at Laurel Hill ENF**

Comments on the Woodlands at Laurel Hill ENF are due to MEPA by January 21, 2005. Sam will prepare a draft letter and submit it to TAC for review. Comments will be based on the previous comments submitted on the traffic analysis prepared for the Chapter 40B permit application.

#### **8. Ellsworth Village Plan**

Art prepared comments for the site plan review of the Ellsworth Village project. The TAC reviewed the design plans and discussed access and sidewalk considerations. Art will make final edits to his letter and submit comments to the Building Department.

#### **9. LRTA Representative**

Ann asked if there needed to be further efforts made to contact the Lowell Regional Transportation Authority representative. Sam responded that he had made an effort to invite Donald Herskovitz to a TAC meeting but Mr. Herskovitz only responded by letter. Sam noted that Mr. Herskovitz does not even live in Acton and suggested that Bob Johnson discuss this issue with the BoS.

#### **10. New Business**

There was discussion regarding the upcoming Acton-Boxborough United Way Community Forum on Transportation Issues which will be held on January 20. Sam and Antonio (and others?) said they would attend. Sam also mentioned that he suggested to Sandy Campbell, the ABUW Executive Director, that the LRTA representative should be invited.

The meeting was adjourned 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

Sam Lawton